



Dean and Betty Arnold

Arnold Bread is a love story in baking.

In March 1940, in a brick oven at the rear of a small house in Stamford, Conn., Paul Dean Arnold and his wife, Betty, baked the first two-dozen loaves of Arnold bread, selling their products as part of a family business operating under the name Brick Oven Bake Shop. Placing their trust in superior ingredients, unbleached spring wheat flour, honey, butter and eggs, they developed the compact, golden rich bread that would soon become a leading premium bread with an international reputation.

Ironically, Mr. Arnold established a baking business of his own because of a

serious allergy to flour. After graduating from Columbia University, he worked for The National Biscuit Co. in Portland, Maine, until his allergies became so bad that Ms. Arnold (unbeknownst to her husband) wrote to the company president asking him to put Mr. Arnold in a position where he wouldn't breathe flour and, if this was not possible, to "please dismiss him." The president chose the latter.

In January 1940, with only \$600 in severance pay, the couple moved in with Mr. Arnold's uncle on a farm in Armonk, N.Y. Always believing there was a need for a better loaf of bread, they took their recipe and stoked up their first brick oven. Soon, the whole



The Brick Oven Bake Shop in Stamford where the idea of Arnold bread was born.

family was involved as relatives helped to slice, wrap and hand deliver the bread from house to house. By 1941, the business had grown to a point that it needed to expand.

With only \$13 in cash, Mr. Arnold walked into the Fidelity Title & Trust Co. in Stamford and placed a loaf of fresh bread on the desk of every employee. He returned a short time later and, after admitting he had no financial statement, asked the company's president for \$1,500. He received the loan on the taste of his bread alone and moved the bakery to Port Chester, N.Y.

Before long, the Arnolds were able to continue this growth. The company was incorporated in 1947, with Dean Arnold as president, his brother, Ted, as vice-president and Betty Arnold as secretary and treasurer. All through their business activities, Mrs. Arnold was known to be a true treasurer in the best sense of the term, keeping a thumb on the checkbook whenever she thought it was the thing to do.

While vacationing in Florida in the 1950s, the couple heard complaints from relocated New Yorkers that they were not able to get quality premium bread like Arnold. So in 1959, the Arnolds took over a 24,000-square-foot plant in Riviera Beach, Fla., and brought their premium bread to the Sunshine State.

In 1964, they built one of the

world's largest baking plants under one roof in Greenwich, Conn., with the largest brick oven anywhere. The company's sales during its first 20 years grew at an astounding rate. In 1945, the company had sales of \$2,215,000, a figure that soared to \$28,908,666 by 1965.

Arnold Bakers was one of the first employers in the nation to provide paid medical and dental coverage for employees and their families. The Arnold's relationship with their employees was that of "heads of the family," and they were often called "Mom and Pop."

Mr. Arnold also pioneered use of the freezing process in bread — a concept derived from his reading of Admiral Richard E. Byrd's accounts of exploration in the Antarctic.

In 1971, Mr. Arnold retired, at which point he leased the hearth bread baking operation to F.&M. Schaeffer Brewing Co. The lease arrangement lasted until 1975, when Schaeffer arranged the purchase of Arnold by the Crowe organization, part of Continental Grain Co.

Mr. Arnold died in 1985 at the age of 76. He was preceded in death by Mrs. Arnold in 1982. But the couple's famous recipes for premium bread live on. In addition to bread, the Arnolds made cookies, cakes, hamburger and hot dog buns and even dog food.

Today, Arnold is part of George Weston Bakeries and the love of baking continues. 🍞



Paul Arnold, right, makes the first grocery store sale to Ernest Granelli of Stamford.